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ABSTRACT

The presentation addresses the implications of P.L. 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, for institutions of higher education that are concerned with special education personnel preparation. After a review of literature, the supply and demand situation as it pertains to teachers of exceptional children is discussed and quality control factors are summarized. Highlighted are the emergence of inservice education and accompanying ramifications as critical to the success of P.L. 94-142. Among other issues explored are the quality and relevance of inservice training, evaluation and cost/benefit variables, the role of state education agencies, and rural service delivery. (Author/SBH)

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This presentation addresses the implications of P.L. 94-142, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act, for institutions of higher education that are concerned with personnel preparation in special education. After beginning with a brief review of relevant literature, the supply and demand situation as it pertains to teachers of exceptional children is discussed. This is followed by a summary of quality control factors.

The presentation highlights the emergence of in-service education and accompanying ramifications as critical to the success of P.L. 94-142. Quality and relevance of in-service training are stressed, along with suggestions for insuring the same. In addition, such variables as evaluation and cost/benefit justifications are explored.

Among other issues that are examined include the role of state education agencies, the proliferation of field courses, the expansion of teacher education programs, rural service delivery, and anticipated effects of expanded services on "in-house" matters within institutions of higher education. Peripheral areas such as vocational/career education and early childhood education are also discussed.

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PUBLIC LAW 94-142, EDUCATION OF ALL HANDICAPPED CHILDREN ACT: SOME PLAIN TALK PURSUANT TO THE ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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The implications of Public Law 94-142, Education of All Handicapped Children Act, for institutions of higher education are significant. Burke (1976) stressed that while P.L. 94-142 did not invalidate the training section (Part D) of P.L. 94-380, the impact on personnel preparation would be far reaching, especially in the area of in-service training. Section 613 of the act (94-142) stipulates that each State plan describe programs and procedures for the

> development and implementation of a comprehensive system of personnel development which shall include the in-service training of general and special educational instructional and support personnel, detailed procedures to assure that all personnel necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained and effective procedures for acquiring and disseminating to teachers and administrators of programs for handicapped children significant information derived from educational research, demonstrations, and similar project.

Harvey (1976) concluded that the many new opportunities created through P.L. 94-142 for personnel preparation were remarkable. With full service mandated by September, 1980, the profession only has approximately 250,000 teachers, or 50 percent of the total needed. An extimated 40 percent of those presently employed are only partially or conditionally certified. This situation is aggravated by the oversupply of teachers in certain categorical areas such as mental

retardation. Harvey stressed that the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped must assist institutions of higher education in re-structuring their preparation programs in order to assist state and local education agencies in complying with the full service mandate, with special emphasis being given to vocational/career education.

The supply and demand situation described by Harvey will lead to continued federal support of preservice programs, while simultaneously increasing the emphasis placed on the design and implementation of in-service models. Funding priorities are inextricably related to supply and demand of teachers. But supply and demand figures may be deceptive. While the apparent supply of teachers is sufficient in some categories, particularly in urban areas, the statistics do not accurately reflect the deficient number of teachers in rural sections of the country. Therefore, the overall figures are not indicative of the total picture. In categories where the supply exceeds the demand, the emphasis on in-service training should be increased. This paradigm is particularly relevant for rural areas where the problem of attracting qualified Bachelor's level personnel is more pronounced.

The supply and demand equation may eventually be affected by requiring specific proficiency levels as a prerequisite for basic certification. For example, would it be unreasonable to expect all teachers to be able to read on a second year of college level? Such a requirement would not only increase accountability, but would also provide additional jobs for an increasing number of young teachers. While academic ability may not be a critical variable affecting the

quality of instruction, an academically superior teacher would probably be more acceptable.

The increasing quality of program approval standards being adopted by many state education agencies should also have a significant impact on the supply of teachers. Teacher surplusses in some areas of education and competition among institutions of higher education have led to more strenuous requirements for approval of certification programs. This pattern will inevitably lead to increased teacher competencies, but may also result in fewer programs (unless education is able to generate greater financial support).

Another variable that could significantly affect teacher supply is increased pressure on Schools of Education to raise admission requirements for entry into teacher education programs. Again, predicated on teacher surplusses in some areas of education, this trend could decrease the number of available teachers, while improving the quality of those who achieve certification. Some states are considering adoption (or have adopted) of a five year certification program, which could potentially intensify this situation to an even greater degree. Parenthetically, adoption of higher admission standards for entry into teacher education could produce some internal disagreements between those who are interested in more strenuous requirements and those who are responsible for generating credit hour production.

The continually emerging concept of in-service training is receiving increased visibility. Too frequently in-service training has been the recipient of harsh and justified criticism due to a lack

relevancy. In-service sessions have often been conducted by university professors who have lost contact with the classroom, by administrators who are insensitive to the interests of teachers, or by external consultants who are not aware of local concerns. While all of these resource professionals maintain their respective areas of expertise, the most effective in-service training is conducted by classroom teachers. Teachers relate to teachers; they share many of the same experiences. In a recent survey of special education coodinators in Alabama as to who was most effective in conducting in-service programs, teachers were the overwhelming choice, followed by state education agency consultants, administrators, and university professors (1976). The role of university professors and local administrators appears to be one of facilitator, or moderator; one who causes events to happen, or creates an environment in which communication may occur.

At a time when institutions of higher education are vigorously competing for students and territorial domains, the competition to contract with local education agencies to conduct in-service training would be tremendous. The relative independence of teacher education programs may become an historical reference. Professors are already being pressured to leave the "ivory tower" and visit the "trenches". Institutions of higher education are aware of the potential financial rewards that are predicated on increased involvement at the local level. This evolving priority of community orientation may have an effect on the "publish or perish" syndrome that is prevalent in a large number of institutions. The visibility of the university among the academic community may be diminished to some degree by the necessity of generating increased revenues.

The concept of university professors returning to the daily pressures of the classroom could be fostered through increased numbers of exchange programs. Such programs would allow professors to replace teachers for a specified time period, while the teachers would be permitted to return to the campus for full time graduate study.

Evaluation instruments designed to determine the most cost/effective in-service training models are needed. With limits existing as to the amount of money available for in-service training and with numerous agencies competing for the money that is available, effort should be expended to ascertain the most qualitative approach in terms of benefits received per dollar expended.

The percentage of increased local educational revenues that are earmarked for teacher salaries as opposed to what is budgeted for improved in-service training should be interesting.[1] Traditionally, teacher salaries have received the highest priority and perhaps this is justified and should continue. But if local administrators are to make the most judicious decisions with regard to how monies available through P.L. 94-142 are to be budgeted, additional training of all school personnel might be necessary. In-service training for superintendents, and particularly for building principals, should be a priority. Additional in-service training for regular educators

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I In some of the smaller local education agencies, exceptional children may not exist in sufficient numbers to generate the minimum of $7500.00, especially during the first year of the Act. As a result, a number of local consortiums might be formed in order to qualify for minimum funding.

is also warranted, particularly in view of their reluctance in many instances to accept the mainstreaming concept. Many argue that mainstreaming may not be the "least restrictive environment". They are heard advancing the argument that was once used on them; that children with academic difficulties can be taught more effectively in a small group, rather than losing their identity in a class of thirty. In an effort to cope with this situation, many states have passed legislation requiring a course in the identification and instruction of exceptional children as a prerequisite for basic certification. Harvey (1976) addressed this situation by stating that personnel preparation programs for regular educators will receive increasing priority, particularly with regard to enhancing their ability to foster the concept of placing children in the least restrictive environment.

The emphasis placed on personnel preparation by state education agencies should continue to expand. Many state education agencies have assumed a leadership role in developing manpower development plans. The percentage of monies available to the state education agencies through P.L. 94-142 should facilitate increased working relationships between the State, local education agencies, and institutions of higher education. Will state education agencies contract with institutions of higher education to provide specified services for local education agencies or will the state education agency function as a conduit for monies to flow to the local education agencies who will contract directly with the institutions. What types of service delivery models for personnel preparation will emerge? The ultimate responsibility for providing answers to these questions

should rest with the local education agencies, predicated on feedback they receive from consumer groups.[2]

Financial limitations may reduce the number of field courses presently being offered by institutions of higher education. Geographical service areas may have to be established with defined limits on the radius of course offerings. Courses could be offered outside of this area only if requested to do so by a specific school system and then only if the institution responsible for that service area is first given the opportunity to decline to offer the same service. Failure of an institution to comply could result in revocation of program approval or failure by the state education agency to recognize the course for certification. Dissimulation of quality has already occurred in some states as a result of duplication and proliferation.

At the present time, when an institution of higher education receives a request to offer a field (extension) course, it is compelled to accept the invitation due to (1) competition with other universities, (2) need for increased credit hour production, (3) professional obligations, and (4) a variety of other factors. This type of policy is gradually exhausting the financial resources of higher education. Monies are not sufficient to offer a large diversity of program selections on an extension basis, often without adequate library resources, trained personnel, facilities, advisement, etc. Increased emphasis on in-service may dilute the financial resources to an even greater extent. The end result is a diminished budget for pre-service training. One possible solution to this apparent dilemma is increased utilization of local educators to teach extension courses. This approach might

[2] The interdepartmental internal disharmony that is occasionally observed in institutions of higher education is frequently caused by disproportionate budgets. Could this same kind of problem result in local school systems as a result of P.L. 94-142?

be feasible due to the relatively large number of local personnel holding terminal degrees. These same people could conduct in-service programs. Many universities may choose to grant course credit for in-service training. This concept may be vulnerable to some qualitative criticisms, but may be elected as a means of generating revenue. Graduate study and in-service may become more synonomous. Another approach that institutions of higher education may follow is expanded utilization of courses taught through closed-circuit or educational television. While this idea may be economically advantageous, the difficulty in providing immediate feedback to teachers has traditionally limited its popularity.

Education, and special education in particular, is experiencing an increase in the number of teachers with sixth year certification. Financial rewards for additional degrees (or courses), availability of field courses, peer pressure, graduate credit for in-service, and effective recruitment programs by graduate schools, are all contributing factors. In addition, many special educators began their programs at the graduate level and feel the need for additional training. This paradigm could result in a large number of highly certified personnel, many of whom will have marginal competencies unless quality control measures are instituted. Increased numbers of sixth year personnel could eventually produce increased enrollments in doctoral programs, particularly with several non-residence programs presently in operation.

A major effect of P.L. 94-142 should have on pre-service is a continued increase in the amount of exposure that students will receive with exceptional children. With practicum sites readily available in most

areas of exceptionality, and through increased interaction with local education agencies, more students can be placed in a classroom setting with fewer logistical difficulties. Travel funds through P.L. 94-142 might be earmarked to allow students to commute to a variety of practicum sites, especially in low-incidence exceptionalities. Methods courses, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and in-service training programs must sufficiently address the development of written individualized plans of study for every student. The involvement of the parents in the formulation of these plans must also be stressed. Specific regulations pursuant of these plans of study should be made available through the state education agencies. Due process procedural safeguards should also be a major programmatic objective.

The current trend toward a return to educational conservatism may have an impact on the implementation of P.L. 94-142. Many states are requiring certain proficiency levels for graduation; others are discouraging or eliminating social promotion. The effect that this trend has on the number of borderline children who may be referred for special class placement could be significant. Also, intelligence levels are frequently receiving decreased considerations as a result of culturally biased assessment instruments, which may produce additional pressures to serve increased numbers of borderline children. (The opposite effect could also be true.) The 12 percent maximum who are eligible for for service under P.L. 94-142 could assume a critical role in the decisions of placement committees. Expanded utilization

of other factors such as diagnostic instruments, anecdotal records, behavioral checklists, academic records, and teacher recommendations, should predictably occur.

An expanded role of personnel preparation programs in institutions of higher education may result in increased pressures on Assistant and Associate Professors by the Full Professors. Full Professors may become complacent in their present positions and generally satisfied with the "status quo". They may oppose a community-oriented training model due to having been separated from the classroom for an extended period of time. This opposition could produce defensiveness and some alienation toward their less experienced, but more aggressive, colleagues.

As mentioned earlier, the role of vocational/career education should receive a high priority. Increased demands for vocationally oriented training programs will exist at the secondary level aimed at producing economic independence of adolescents. This pressure should produce a working relationship in institutions of higher education between Departments of Vocational Education and Special Education. Leadership for establishing such relationships will probably occur initially within the Office of Education (OE).

Early childhood education for the handicapped will be directly affected by P.L. 94-142. Because of the additional money ($300.00 per child) provided for preschool programs at the local level) consortium arrangements in institutions of higher education between early childhood programs and special education departments will probably occur in a manner similar to that involving vocational education. Equally affected will be the ancillary service areas, including such specialties as

occupational therapy, physical therapy, adaptive physical education, educational diagnosis, and counseling. Many institutions will also become increasingly involved in training paraprofessionals and volunteers. The degree of this involvement will be determined to some degree by P.L. 94-142 regulations and by the willingness of the local education agencies to employ such personnel.

For the next few years, at least until 1980, increased emphasis will be placed on developing programs for the severely and profoundly handicapped. By 1980, the educational pendulum will probably swing in the other direction, toward the larger incidence areas once again. Pressures will probably be exerted by professional organizations in special education, the membership of which will be largely composed of professionals from the larger incidence areas. Strong support will probably also be received from professional organizations comprised primarily of regular educators who may become increasingly dissatisfied with mainstreaming.

Whether universities will be involved in increased litigation as a result of P.L. 94-142 has yet to be determined. Are teacher education programs legally responsible for the quality of the product they graduate? This question may have to be resolved by the judicial system.

Being a pacesetter is not a new role for special education. Assuming a role of educational leadership is welcomed by the profession. Having historically taken the lead in such areas as individualized instruction, diagnostic and prescriptive teaching, and due process procedures, to name a few, the field is prepared to strengthen its position. The enactment of P.L. 94-142 is another vehicle that will serve as the catalyst in providing educational opportunities for <u>all</u> children.

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